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SUBJECT: ISRAELI UPDATE ON JORDANIAN ISSUES  
  
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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Luis G. Moreno, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (C) Summary. A senior Israeli NSC official told us September 4 that National Security Adviser Arad's August 31 visit to Amman was a good opportunity to exchange views but did not produce any results. Contrary to Jordanian expectations reported reftel, Israel does not intend to allow a visit by a Jordanian survey team to the site of the Mughrabi Gate ramp since Jordan continues to insist that they should construct the new ramp. The GOI reportedly is looking for a gesture toward Jordan that would serve as a "sweetener" for Israel's intent to construct the new ramp. The Israelis are aware of Jordanian sensitivities about right wing members of Knesset reviving rhetoric about "Jordan is Palestine." Our interlocutor dismissed "Jordan is Palestine" as a long-since-discredited idea since a strong Jordan is in Israel's national security interests. Despite his comment, the GOI does not appear to have any new ideas about how to improve their testy relationship with Jordan. End Summary.

12. (C) Israeli National Security Council senior staffer Ambassador Eitan Naeh provided PolCouns with a brief readout of National Security Adviser Uzi Arad's August 31 meeting in Amman with Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh (reftel). Naeh said that Arad's visit was arranged during a telephone conversation between PM Netanyahu and King Abdullah. Netanyahu reportedly hoped that Arad would be able to confirm a meeting with the King in New York during the UNGA, but Naeh said that so far, the meeting has not been confirmed. Naeh stressed that Arad coordinated his visit to Jordan with Foreign Minister Lieberman and was careful to avoid creating the impression that the NSC would serve as an alternative channel to the MFA.

13. (C) Regarding the issue of the new ramp the Israelis plan to build leading up to the Mughrabi Gate entrance to the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount, Naeh said Arad listened carefully to Jordanian concerns, but Naeh stressed that the GOI does not intend to allow a Jordanian survey team to visit the site to take measurements. Naeh explained that the revised Israeli design for the ramp incorporates a number of Jordanian recommendations, and that Jordan is not interested in simply measuring the site but in constructing the new ramp themselves, which Israel will not accept. Naeh said the provisions of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty that refer to Jordan's special role in the Old City of Jerusalem apply only to the Haram itself, not to the plaza below it. Naeh said that the GOI is looking for some kind of gesture to the Jordanian role in the Old City or perhaps a further release of Jordanian prisoners in Israel that could be offered as a "sweetener" to help the Jordanians drop their insistence on constructing the Mughrabi Gate ramp.

14. (C) Arad and Judeh reportedly discussed the peace process, with the Jordanians stressing the importance of Israel's acceptance of a settlement freeze and Arad asking for Jordanian assistance with getting the Palestinians to agree to resume negotiations. Naeh indicated that the Israelis are aware of intense Jordanian sensitivity regarding

discussion by right-wing members of the Knesset of the "Jordan is Palestine" idea, but he thought the Jordanian reaction to be exaggerated. Naeh described "Jordan is Palestine" as a long-since discredited idea in Israel. and stressed that a strong Jordan remains a critical Israeli national security interest. That said, he appeared to be at a loss for ideas on how to improve ties to Jordan.

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